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NEWS RELEASE

UD COMMITS TO FIRE SPRINKLER SYSTEMS FOR NEW DUPLEXES IN STUDENT NEIGHBORHOOD

DAYTON, Ohio — The duplexes that the University of Dayton builds in the student neighborhood are always appreciated for their amenities by the students who live there. But the four new duplexes under construction this summer will also include a new standard for fire safety protection in University student residences — sprinkler systems.

The sprinkler systems are not required by current building codes and add \$29,000 to the construction cost of each dwelling. The four duplexes, at a total construction cost of \$1.6 million, will house 48 students this fall.

"One feature that sets UD apart from other universities is the mix of student housing we have available," said Bill Schuerman, vice president for student development and dean of students. "Our upperclassmen who live in the single-family homes and duplexes in the student neighborhood value the community atmosphere and the 'front-porch' character of the neighborhood. The duplexes provide updated housing but preserve the character of the neighborhood."

While the final plans for the new duplexes, including the sprinkler systems, were approved after the Dec. 10, 2000, death of A.J. Cohen, a 21-year-old senior who died in a pre-dawn house fire in the student neighborhood, the consideration of placing sprinkler systems in new student residence construction had been under review for some time.

"The installation of sprinkler systems has been an ongoing and evolving issue," Schuerman said. "When we built the Lawnview Apartments, which opened in May 2000, we took the step of sprinkling each apartment, recognizing that a cost-benefit analysis of risk vs. the marginal increase in the cost of construction on this project clearly indicated that we should sprinkle it."

"If there was any lingering doubt as to the prudence of including sprinkler systems in all new residence construction, the tragedy of A.J.'s death obviously eliminated it."

In the duplexes, recessed sprinkler heads will be installed in all living spaces, such as

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bedrooms, living rooms and kitchens. If a fire should break out and reach 155 degrees Fahrenheit, a filament in the sprinkler head will melt, releasing the spray of water. An alarm will sound and a strobe light mounted outside the duplex will activate to guide firefighters to the structure. A flow alarm will alert UD's public safety department when the system activates.

Since heat sets off individual sprinkler heads, those located in areas not affected by fire will not activate.

Bob Alexander, fire prevention specialist for the Dayton Fire Department, explained the system is designed to prevent "flashover," when smoke and heat build up enough that everything in the room bursts into fire at once. A flashover temperature would be well over 1000 degrees Fahrenheit, he said.

"The water helps cool down the air temperature in the room and will usually extinguish the fire," Alexander said. "It decreases enormously the possibility of a fatality in a fire."

The new construction will bring the number of duplexes in the south student neighborhood to eight.

"The project is on schedule, which is great because we're on a very tight schedule with opening slated for this fall," said Cathy Ford, project manager for the duplexes, which are located at 228-230, 232-234, 324-328 and 428-432 Stonemill Road.

Edge & Tinney designed the project, with construction by Kendell Construction.

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